

LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to **Faith** using **Moses** as our example

**UNIT
ONE:**

THE FAITH CONNECTION

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1

PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God has a purpose for everyone.
2. My faith helps me overcome challenges.
3. I have faith that God is in control.
4. My faith helps me do what is right.
5. My faith helps me to persevere.
6. My faith helps me to trust in God.
7. My faith helps me to be obedient.
8. I will share my faith with others.

The Faith Connection
The birth of Moses: **Exodus 2:1-10**

Connection Word:

faith



LESSON 1:

**God has a purpose
for everyone.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.' So the woman took the baby and nursed him," Exodus 2:9.

REFLECTION:

This passage from Exodus is the dialogue between Pharaoh's daughter and Moses' birth mother after Pharaoh's daughter pulls Moses from the reeds of the Nile River. Through God's plan, mother and child are reunited. This is the beginning of God's plan to save his people from Egypt. Every person in this story has a crucial role: Moses' mother, his sister Miriam, Pharaoh's daughter, and, of course, baby Moses. No person is unimportant. Just as God had a purpose for this family in Exodus, he has a purpose for you! You are also a precious child of God, and he loves you very much.

PRAYER:

Loving Father, I am grateful that I matter to you and that you have a specific purpose for my life. Please give me patience as that purpose unfolds and courage to embrace it. Amen.

The Faith Connection
Moses escapes into Midian: **Exodus 2:11-25**

Connection Word:

challenge



LESSON 2:

**My faith helps me
overcome challenges.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well," Exodus 2:15.

REFLECTION:

After Moses killed an Egyptian, he ran away to Midian to avoid Pharaoh's punishment. Moses was a stranger in Midian. He kept his faith in God, and it sustained him. He never gave up even though his future was not certain. When you face challenges in your life, think of Moses and his story. If you are feeling alone, remember to put your trust in God. Moses did, and look at how God used him!

PRAYER:

Dear God, I ask that you continue to stay by my side as challenges enter my life. I trust in your plan for my life. You are amazing God, and I am grateful for your guidance. Amen.

The Faith Connection

God talks to Moses from a burning bush:
Exodus 3:1–4:17

Connection Word:

control



LESSON 3:

I have faith that God
is in control.

DEVOTION VERSE:

“So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey,” Exodus 3:8a.

REFLECTION:

God heard his people suffering and began to take action to save them. He shares his plan with Moses. This passage shows us that God is indeed in control. God tends to matters in his own time, at his own pace. As humans, we are often impatient to see results. We want instant gratification. Once we release that mindset and trust in God’s control of things, we can enjoy life the way God plans it to be.

PRAYER:

Holy Father, you are indeed in control! Please give me the strength that I need to relinquish all control to you, my Creator. Thank you for your unconditional love for me. Amen.

The Faith Connection

Moses returns to Egypt:
Exodus 5:1–11:10

Connection Word:

plague



LESSON 4:

My faith helps me do
what is right.

DEVOTION VERSE:

“But Moses said to the Lord, ‘If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?’” Exodus 6:12.

REFLECTION:

Moses believed in God. He was concerned that if his own people did not want to listen to him, his message to Pharaoh would surely fail. God encouraged Moses to persevere, and it was because of Moses’ *faith* that the Hebrews, God’s chosen people, were freed from Pharaoh. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” How strong is your faith? Lean on your faith, as defined in Hebrews 11:1, when you are deciding which path to take or which decision to make.

PRAYER:

Dear God, I believe in you and your love for me. Even though I cannot see you, I know that you are with me at all times and in all places. Amen.

The Faith Connection
Moses helps the Hebrews prepare:
Exodus 12:1–13:16

Connection Word:

persevere



LESSON 5:

**My faith helps me
to persevere.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

“When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down,” Exodus 12:23.

REFLECTION:

The faith of the Hebrews saved their first born child from death by following God’s instructions for the Passover. We are not usually presented with such extreme circumstances through which we must persevere. But we are challenged often and it’s sometimes easier to give up and lose hope. Think of a time in your life where your faith was tested. Maybe a loved one was diagnosed with a serious illness, or maybe you faced unemployment. Whatever your circumstances, when you cling to your faith and spend time with God through prayer or praise, he will provide all the strength you need.

PRAYER:

Lord, there are many times in my life where my faith may be tested. I ask you to give me the strength that I need to persevere during these times. Amen.

The Faith Connection
Moses leads God’s people through
the Red Sea: **Exodus 13:17–14:31**

Connection Word:

chariot



LESSON 6:

**My faith helps me to
trust in God.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

*“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still,”
Exodus 14:14.*

REFLECTION:

It is not always so easy to be still and let the Lord fight our battles. The Israelites did it when they were trapped. They believed Moses and trusted in God to save them. The Red Sea parted, clearing a path for their future. What battles can you give to the Lord? Can he clear a path for you? Let your faith in God’s power build the trust in your relationship with him.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for taking on my battles. I will work hard to communicate with you and spend time with you every day. Amen.



The Faith Connection

Moses receives the Ten Commandments:
Exodus 19:1–20:21

Connection Word:

commandment



LESSON 7:

**My faith helps me
to be obedient.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning,'" Exodus 20:20.

REFLECTION:

When Moses told the people at Mt. Sinai that God was present, they became fearful. Moses asked them to be obedient, follow God's instructions, and not be afraid. It is important to remember God's power as we are presented with our choices every day. God is all-knowing. He desires that we trust in him and know his love for us. We should always be aware of his awesome power as we make daily decisions in our lives.

PRAYER:

Merciful Father, you are an all-powerful God. I ask for strength as I try to make decisions that will honor you. Amen.



The Faith Connection

Moses shares his faith: Deuteronomy 11:1–21:
Hebrews 11:24–28

Connection Word:

witness



LESSON 8:

I will share my faith with others.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel," Hebrews 11:24–28.

REFLECTION:

A woman very recently began to understand the importance of sharing her faith with others. She lived a faithful and happy existence yet never even considered sharing her love of God with others. She didn't know how. She befriended other women and noticed the gentle way in which they shared their faith. They proudly wore cross necklaces and had Bible verses displayed in their homes. They did not gossip but rather spoke often of prayer and their relationship with God. The woman modeled herself after her friends. To her surprise, her faith grew even stronger and she became even more joyful. Moses boldly and courageously shared his faith. So did the woman in this story. So can you.

PRAYER:

Loving God, I want my faith to strengthen. I want to share my love for you with others, but I don't always know how. Lead me. Amen.

LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to **Communication** through **Paul's Ministry**

**UNIT
TWO:**

THE COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God knows me; I want to know him.
2. Connect with God through prayer.
3. Connect with God by listening to him.
4. Connect to God through worship.
5. Connect to God through the Bible.
6. Connect to God through the Holy Spirit.
7. Connect to God by letting him help me solve my problems.
8. Connect to others with God's help.

The Communication Connection
Jesus speaks to Saul:
Acts 9:1-19

Connection Word:

communication



LESSON 1:

**God knows me;
I want to know him.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him," Acts 9:3.

REFLECTION:

Saul was headed to Damascus to hunt down believers of Christ and throw them in jail. Jesus stopped him in his tracks as a bright, heavenly light blinded him for three days. Then Jesus sent him on his way, sent Ananias to heal him, recognize him as a believer, and baptize him. He then made Saul a witness who changed his name to Paul and helped to form the early church. Whew! What does it take for us to know him today? For some it is a huge, life-changing event; for others, it's a bit more subtle. How did you come to know God? Do you know him yet?

PRAYER:

Gracious Father, I want to know you. Come into my heart and give me the strength I need to have a closer relationship with you. Thank you, Lord, for Saul and his transformation. Transform me. Amen.



The Communication Connection
Paul prays for the church in Colossae:
Colossians 1:1-14

Connection Word:

prayer



LESSON 2:

**Connect with God
through prayer.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding," Colossians 1:9.

REFLECTION:

Prayer is a lovely gift from God. It is a time of reflection, thanksgiving, adoration, and a time to bring your requests straight to God. God encourages us, through Paul, to take time daily in prayer. Do you have a place in your home where you can imagine that Jesus waits for you? Wouldn't you make time in prayer to visit with him just a little every day? He wants to know you, and you are precious to him. Take advantage of this very gracious gift.

PRAYER:

Merciful, thoughtful Father, I am so thankful that you want to know my thoughts. I matter to you. Thank you for creating me and for wanting to hear from me every day. You are an amazing blessing to me. Amen.

The Communication Connection
Paul listens to God: **Acts 16:6-10**

Connection Word:

listen



LESSON 3:

**Connect with God
by listening to him.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them," Acts 16:10.

REFLECTION:

There are seminars that people can attend to learn how to listen to God. A great way to listen to God is to actually be still and hear what he is telling you. Quiet your brain from all of the thoughts that can overwhelm you, take a deep breath and listen. Is he talking to you? Is he answering your prayers? The answer is, yes. God has made it very clear in the Bible that he wants us to pray. He wants to hear from us. It is then our responsibility to take the time to listen to our Father respond to us. God speaks to us through Scripture, the Holy Spirit, Christian friends, and many other ways. Take a moment, listen to him, he's there.

PRAYER:

Loving God, I am humbled that you want to hear from me through my prayers. Please give me the discipline to spend time daily listening to you because I know you have so much to tell me. Amen.

The Communication Connection
Paul and Silas worship God from prison:
Acts 16:16-36

Connection Word:

worship



LESSON 4:

**Connect to God
through worship.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family," Acts 16:34.

REFLECTION:

There are so many ways to worship God; attending worship services, singing praise, and spending time in nature. The choices are everywhere and are abounding. Paul and Silas worshipped God from their prison cell and so impressed their guard that he and his family became believers. Did Paul and Silas worship God to impress their guard? No, they worshipped God in jail because they were so full of God's love that they simply couldn't contain themselves. If our hearts are so full that we can't stop ourselves from worshiping God at any time, in any place, just imagine how we might impact others.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, fill me up. Fill me up with your love so that I can't help but worship you. Help me to share with the children of this church how wonderful I think you are. Amen.

The Communication Connection
Paul explains about the armor of God:
Ephesians 6:10-20

Connection Word:

armor



LESSON 5:

**Connect to God
through the Bible.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes," Ephesians 6:11.

REFLECTION:

There are many times in our lives when we need to remember the armor of God. In Ephesians 6, Paul tells us that God can fully protect us. We need to make a conscious effort to cover ourselves with God. When we do, we can go into battle against the worst opponents and be assured of God's covering us like a full suit of armor. The next time you feel overwhelmed by circumstances in your life or have a difficult decision to make, put on God's armor. It will truly make your choices and circumstances less frightening.

PRAYER:

Dear God, help me to know when I need to "put on the full armor of God." Thank you for loving me so much that you want to equip me and protect me. I'm so glad I'm a special child of yours. Amen.

The Communication Connection
Paul explains how to live by the Spirit:
Galatians 5:16-26

Connection Word:

Holy Spirit



LESSON 6:

**Connect to God through
the Holy Spirit.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires," Galatians 5:24.

REFLECTION:

As humans who are sinful by nature, we make many decisions every day of our lives. We can choose to make these decisions by ourselves, or we can include the Holy Spirit in the process. A simple way to do that is to begin each day in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide every decision that you need to make. The key is to pray about each choice and then wait a moment to hear a response. It may be an obvious pull in one direction, or you may have to take more time on some decisions. It is important to remember that once God forgives our sins, he moves on. We need to put our own sins on a cross every day, give them over to God and move on, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our days.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father give me the self-discipline I need to give you my sins. Let your Holy Spirit guide me. Thank you for your grace. Amen.

The Communication Connection
Paul sails for Rome: **Acts 27:1-44**

Connection Word:

help



LESSON 7:

**Connect to God by letting him
help me solve my problems.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me," Acts 27:25.

REFLECTION:

In this passage of Acts, Paul shows unwavering faith as he sails to Rome on his way to prison. He comforts his fellow shipmates and captors as they face danger on their journey. How often do we show such courage in our journey through life? Faith that God knows our path and is always with us can get us through even the toughest problems.

PRAYER:

Gracious God, you are amazing! Even when my life begins to overwhelm me, I take great comfort knowing that you are beside me. Please help me to strengthen my faith and lean on you even more. Amen.



The Communication Connection
Paul tells others about God: **Acts 9:20-31**

Connection Word:

preach



LESSON 8:

**Connect to others
with God's help.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God," Acts 9:20.

REFLECTION:

Helping others to connect with God can be a tall order. As children's leaders, it is an important goal to help our students to connect to God. We can also work to connect our friends, neighbors, co-workers, even strangers to God. How? By living our life for God. We can ask him into the start of every one of our days and invite him to guide our every decision. Then his light will shine through us and others will want to connect with God also.

PRAYER:

Lord, Paul was such a dedicated servant. Help me to be a connecting point for others. Let your light shine so brightly through me that everyone around me wants to plug in. Amen.

LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to Love through Jesus

UNIT
THREE:

THE LOVE CONNECTION

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart. ... Love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37, 39

PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God is love.
2. I have Jesus as my Savior and Counselor.
3. I have Jesus to teach me how to love.
4. I have Jesus as my daily source of love.
5. I have Jesus to show me how to forgive others.
6. I have Jesus to show me how to love my neighbor.
7. I show my love to Jesus because he loves me.
8. I show my love to others through service.

The Love Connection
Jesus and Nicodemus: **John 3:1-21**

Connection Word:

love



LESSON 1:

God is love.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," John 3:16.

REFLECTION:

The love of God fills all who believe in him through the gift of his son, Jesus Christ. God's love is giving, and it is the basis by which he does everything else. That is why VeggieConnections is so important in the lives of kids today. We can teach kids the Scripture, and encourage memorization, but the significance of that will not mean anything if kids don't build and develop a relationship with God and their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Think about when your relationship began with God. How did you feel when you truly understood the immensity of his gift through his son, Jesus Christ? How do feel each year when you remember that Christ took the punishment for your sins, and then celebrate the resurrection and gift of life everlasting?

This is a lot for kids to understand and accept! But this is the root of our relationship. God knows that we will sin. What a sign of love and comfort for kids to know that Jesus took the punishment for their sins! And despite all the earthly fears and sadness in today's world, God gives us a future of hope and joy through the resurrection! There is no better message we can communicate to young people today!

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, help me to understand and accept how much you love me! Guide me as I share this gift with children and help them to connect to you in an amazing way! In your name I pray. Amen.

The Love Connection
Jesus and the Holy Spirit: **John 16:5-15**

Connection Word:

counselor



LESSON 2:

I have Jesus as my
Savior and Counselor.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth," John 16:13a.

REFLECTION:

A four year old girl's grandmother passed away several years before the little girl was born. One day, she was riding in the car with her mom when she suddenly said, "Mommy, where is your mommy?" Her mother explained that she was in heaven with God.

After several minutes of thought, the little girl exclaimed, "Mommy! If your mommy is with God and God is in my heart—then she's in my heart, too!" Choking back tears, her mother affirmed the little girl's thought process.

The Holy Spirit works in many wonderful ways to help us uncover the truth. The Spirit guides our hearts and counsels us in right and wrong, in times of sadness, and in many new and wonderful discoveries every day. When is the last time you allowed the Spirit of truth to enter your heart and listened to what he said?

PRAYER:

Wonderful Counselor, Spirit of Truth, live in my heart as my relationship with you grows. Amen.



The Love Connection
Jesus teaches the Beatitudes:
Matthew 5:1-12

Connection Word:

teach



LESSON 3:

**I have Jesus to
teach me how to love.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me,"
Matthew 5:11.

REFLECTION:

These words were spoken by Jesus to his disciples and a large crowd at his Sermon on the Mount. Think of a time in which you were challenged to speak for Christ in light of receiving persecution from others.

This may be one of the more difficult challenges for children to face. Above so many other things, children hate to be teased or put down by other children. Yet, we are asking kids to stand up to others and speak up for Christ in light of this fear.

What are some of the ways you have found to tell others about Jesus, despite your fears of being put down for it? Think of ways you can help children to draw on their courage and connect to their relationship in God when it comes to sharing the good news of Jesus with others!

PRAYER:

Forgiving God, give me strength to feel your blessing in my life when others are pulling me down. I know that with your love all things are possible. Please bring your light into the lives of those who persecute, insult, and talk about me because they don't understand my relationship with you. Amen.

The Love Connection
Jesus and the disciples:
Matthew 14:22-36

Connection Word:

source



LESSON 4:

**I have Jesus as my
daily source of love.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'"
Matthew 14:31.

REFLECTION:

Doubt creeps into our lives all of the time. You may wonder why you doubt anything at all when you are confident that God is directing your life. Doubt is one of Satan's strongest tools. Jesus shows us that even the slightest wavering of our faith can let doubt in and cause us to sink. When we recognize it in our lives, we can fight back through prayer, faith, and trust in our Lord. We, too, can reach out like Peter did and grab hold of Jesus' hand.

PRAYER:

Merciful Father, give me the strength I need to have full confidence in your love for me. I know that you have a plan for my life, and I thank you for that. Help me to stay above water today, Lord, to rise above the doubt. Amen.

The Love Connection
Jesus and others: **Luke 15:11-32**

Connection Word:

forgive



LESSON 5:

**I have Jesus to show me
how to forgive others.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven," Luke 6:37.

REFLECTION:

Jesus is giving us simple guidelines in this verse. Are they really so simple? We often get bogged down in our lives with holding grudges and judging our friends, politicians, celebrities, and even total strangers. When we stop these behaviors, the light of Christ will shine through us, enabling us to better serve God.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for your light in my life. Please give me the patience, strength, and courage that I need to reserve judgment on others. Help me be quick to forgive those who wrong me. Amen.

The Love Connection
Jesus and the parable of the good Samaritan: **Luke 10:25-37**

Connection Word:

neighbor



LESSON 6:

**I have Jesus to show me how
to love my neighbor.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself,'" Luke 10:27.

REFLECTION:

A neighbor is a true gift from God. Whether we live in an apartment building, a subdivision, a mobile home park, or a subsidized housing project, we have neighbors we can depend on or who may depend on us. Think today of a neighbor from your past or present that has had some impact on your life. Now take a moment to decide how you can be an extension of Christ to any of your current neighbors. Could you invite them to worship? Help watch their children? Make them a meal? How can you love your neighbor today?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, I thank you for all of the neighbors that have been a part of my life. Please help me to be a loving neighbor to everyone around me. Amen.



The Love Connection

Jesus tells us how to show love:
John 14:23-31a

Connection Word:

obey



LESSON 7:

I show my love to Jesus
because he loves me.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid," John 14:27.

REFLECTION:

In this verse, Jesus is sharing the love and gift of the Holy Spirit. He encourages us to have secure faith in the fact that the peace of God is always available to us. A woman was in the final stages of cancer and due to an oversight was not given her pain medication. As her family watched her writhe in pain, they witnessed an incredible sight. She had been incoherent for weeks, but suddenly, in this time of agony and pain, she turned her head to the empty chair beside her bed and began to talk to Jesus. She told him that she was ready to go with him. She continued this calm conversation until her medication arrived. The Spirit is an amazing extension of God's love for us and is a gift that can bring us calm in a life that can at times be unsettling.

PRAYER:

Loving Father, what an amazing gift of love, your Holy Spirit, you have given to me! I feel blessed that you love me at all times, in all circumstances. Give me the daily discipline to experience and appreciate the peace that your Spirit brings. Amen.

The Love Connection

Jesus and his people: **Matthew 20:20-28**

Connection Word:

servant



LESSON 8:

I show my love to others
through service.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many," Matthew 20:28.

REFLECTION:

This verse tells us that Jesus did not come to this earth "to be served, but to serve." Jesus tells us that it is our responsibility as believers in him to go and serve others as he served us through his death on the cross. There are many ways to serve God, and it is important to use our service to others to share the love of God. For example, serving God by caring for his children is a wonderful way of extending his love to others.

PRAYER:

Holy God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. I want to serve you and others to the best of my abilities. Help me to know where my gifts from you can be used. Amen.

LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to **Trust** with life examples from **Joseph**

**UNIT
FOUR:**

THE TRUST CONNECTION

"May the God of hope fill you with all
joy and peace as you trust in him."
Romans 15:13a

PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God knows what's best for me.
2. I will trust God to help me with my problems.
3. I will show my trust in God by obeying him.
4. I will trust God is with me in hard times.
5. I will trust God to give me courage.
6. I will strengthen my trust in God by building my relationship with him.
7. I will trust in God's plan.
8. I will show my trust in God to others.

The Trust Connection
The story of Joseph: **Genesis 37:1–50:26**

Connection Word:

trust



LESSON 1:

**God knows
what's best for me.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"So Pharaoh asked them, 'Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?'" Genesis 41:38.

REFLECTION:

Do others see you as a person housing the Spirit of God? Joseph had many opportunities to show God's Spirit. He was enslaved and in prison. He had challenging interactions with Pharaoh and with his family. And this is just to name a few examples! Our lives may not have as much turmoil as Joseph's, but they are no less important to God. Grow in your faith until the Holy Spirit is shining through you to others. Live by example, spend time in prayer, read your Bible, and share your faith with others by allowing the Spirit of God to lead your days.

PRAYER:

Lord God, I want to live as an example to others. Fill me with your Spirit. I trust you and your plan for my life. Amen.



The Trust Connection
Joseph is sold into slavery:
Genesis 37:3–36

Connection Word:

slavery



LESSON 2:

**I will trust God to help me
with my problems.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt," Genesis 37:28.

REFLECTION:

God is in control of our lives, but it may not always feel that way. When we look at this portion of Joseph's life, we can easily see how Joseph could doubt. However, God took Joseph's horrible circumstances and used them as a vessel to bring about his will. God does the same thing with our lives. He allows adversity to touch us because he knows that he is there to help us through. We can invite God in and embrace his help. Only God knows what is in store for our future.

PRAYER:

Almighty and merciful God, thank you that what others intend for harm, you use for good. I know that I am your child, and you are always with me. Please give me strength like Joseph had as I confront problems in my life. Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph is tempted to do wrong:
Genesis 39:1-20a

Connection Word:

temptation



LESSON 3:

**I will show my trust in God
by obeying him.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field," Genesis 39:5.

REFLECTION:

Joseph was a man of great honor. He was tempted by Potiphar's wife and chose not to follow temptation. As a result, Potiphar's wife lied and Joseph was sent to prison. The Lord knew Joseph's heart, just as he knows yours. God knew Joseph was innocent and blessed him in many ways. It's important to remember that God knows your heart. He created you. Obey his commands and trust that he will always take care of you.

PRAYER:

Merciful God, you are my Creator. Please give me the strength that I need to battle temptations in my life. I am thankful that you are my God! Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph in prison:
Genesis 39:20b-23

Connection Word:

attitude



LESSON 4:

**I will trust God is with me
in hard times.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden," Genesis 39:20b-21.

REFLECTION:

God is with us in all circumstances, in good times and bad. Our attitude can greatly influence situations in our lives. When Joseph was in prison, he had no way of knowing if he would ever be released. He worked hard at his tasks and kept a positive attitude. Joseph is an excellent example to follow. When life seems to overwhelm you, keep your chin up! You don't know what God has planned. He can turn around the most desperate situation; just look at Joseph's life!

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, you are a blessing in my life! Thank you for being with me always. Lord, I especially thank you for being with me in hard times. Give me strength to keep a positive attitude. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph and the cupbearer and baker:
Genesis 40:1-23

Connection Word:

courage



LESSON 5:

**I will trust God
to give me courage.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him," Genesis 40:23.

REFLECTION:

After Joseph interpreted the dream of the chief cupbearer during their imprisonment, the cupbearer was freed. Joseph had asked the cupbearer to remember him and help gain his release. The cupbearer did not, even though it was by Joseph's help that he was free. Imagine the disappointment! But Joseph did not lose his faith; he continued to trust in God to get him through. There may be a time when you feel forgotten, left out, or abandoned. Have faith like Joseph. God will work in his time, and then great things may happen to you as well.

PRAYER:

Dearest God, Father, give me courage to depend on you more. Thank you for the courageous example set by Joseph. Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams:
Genesis 41:1-40

Connection Word:

interpret



LESSON 6:

**I will strengthen my trust in God by
building my relationship with him.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt," Genesis 41:8a.

REFLECTION:

In this passage of Genesis, Pharaoh calls for magicians and wise men to interpret his dreams. These men had powers, but they were not from God and therefore useless in interpreting Pharaoh's dream from God. How often do you trust in things other than God? Do you read your horoscope or rely on a magical game to give you answers? The only true answers come from God. How can you ask God questions? It is as simple as spending time in prayer and seeking guidance from God's Word. Build your relationship with him and trust in his plan for your life.

PRAYER:

Mighty Counselor, I am thankful for the chance to deepen my relationship with you. Help me to put aside all ways but yours, for you alone have the truth. Please be with me as I continue to trust in the plan that you have for me. Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph is in charge of Egypt:
Genesis 41:41–45:15

Connection Word:

plan



LESSON 7:

**I will trust in
God's plan.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you," Genesis 45:5.

REFLECTION:

These are Joseph's words as he makes himself known to his brothers. Joseph's story is an incredible example of God's plan in action. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and sent to prison as an innocent man. He spent thirteen years in slavery and in prison. Then he was released by Pharaoh himself because of God's gift of interpreting dreams. He was appointed to highest official next to the Pharaoh. He saved Egypt and helped pave the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. This was all God's plan in God's timing. Remember Joseph's story when things don't seem to be going your way. We are on a journey, with God guiding our steps.

PRAYER:

Gracious God, thank you for being in charge of my life. Help me to fully rely on you, especially when I am afraid of what my future may hold. Amen.

The Trust Connection
Joseph reassures his brothers:
Genesis 50:1–20

Connection Word:

reassure



LESSON 8:

**I will show my trust
in God to others.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" Genesis 50:20.

REFLECTION:

Plans. Everybody has a plan, a schedule, and an order of events. Plans give us order and purpose. But who really makes our plans? When we make our own plans, we can be very goal-oriented and disappointed if our plans don't work out. The real architect of our plans is God. Trust in God to plan your day, your week, and your life. He has already done it! When we realize this and give our time to him to use, we can find peace in our busy lives.

PRAYER:

Dear God, organizer of my days, please take my self-made schedule and guide me to your plan. Amen.



LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to **Time** through the writings of the disciple **John**

**UNIT
FIVE:**

THE TIME CONNECTION

"Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom."
Psalm 90:12



PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God is eternal.
2. God is with me all the time.
3. I will spend time with God.
4. I will set godly priorities with my time.
5. I will trust in God's timing.
6. I will make good use of my time.
7. I will look for times to share God's Word with others.
8. I will use my time to serve others.

The Time Connection

John writes about how God became human:

John 1:1-18; 1 John 5:13-18

Connection Word:

eternal



LESSON 1:

God is eternal.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life," 1 John 5:13.

REFLECTION:

In the book of 1 John, John is an older man who is writing a letter to be given to several churches. He may be the only surviving disciple at the time this letter was written. It is through this letter that John reminds us that God is love, God is light, and belief in Jesus brings us eternal life with God, who is eternal.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, eternal God, I am so proud to be a Christian! I am thankful that you have such an unending love for me. I trust in your promises. Help me to live my life for you. Amen.



The Time Connection

John writes about the Holy Spirit:

John 14:15-29

Connection Word:

Holy Spirit



LESSON 2:

God is with me
all the time.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you," John 14:16-17.

REFLECTION:

These are Jesus' words reassuring us that even though he will leave the world, God sends the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to us. The Spirit is always with us. We must choose to let the Spirit work in our lives. The Holy Spirit will take away our fears and doubts. The hardest part about letting the Spirit work in us is to let go of those fears and doubts and to let God fully into our lives.

PRAYER:

Wonderful Counselor, I ask that you enter my life. I have so many fears. Thank you for taking my burdens and making them your own. I want to hand over my fears to you, but it is sometimes so hard to let them go. Give me the courage I need to let your Spirit work in me. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about walking in the light:
1 John 1:5–2:6

Connection Word:

light



LESSON 3:

**I will spend time
with God.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin," 1 John 1:7.

REFLECTION:

Light and darkness are referred to many times in the Bible. Simply stated, God is the light and evil is the darkness. John is telling us that when we stay in the light, the truth of Jesus, we will be saved from all sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is no simple task! God not only wants us to believe in this truth, he also wants us to live this truth. Walk in the light of God, as Jesus did. Live your life in a godly manner, and the light will shine through you. This is a daunting challenge, but what is truly wonderful is that God will forgive us when we make mistakes! When we confess our sins to him with a loving and contrite heart, he will wipe our slate clean.

PRAYER:

Merciful Father, bring me into your light. Illuminate my days. Direct my steps, and show me the path that helps keep me focused on you. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about Jesus' teachings:
John 15:1–17

Connection Word:

priority



LESSON 4:

**I will set godly priorities
with my time.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing," John 15:5.

REFLECTION:

In this passage of John, Jesus is teaching us an important truth. We rely on him for nourishment, as a branch relies on its vine. When the branch is connected to the vine, it gets fed and produces fruit. When we are connected to Jesus, we are also fed and can bear amazing fruit. This means that when we rely on Jesus, we overflow with his love and light, and then he can do incredible things with our lives. Without Jesus, our lives are empty. We are unproductive.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, you are indeed my vine! I want to thrive with your nourishment. Work in my life. Help me to prioritize my days so that I can produce fruit to benefit my family, community, world, and myself. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about Lazarus: **John 11:1-44**

Connection Word:

patience



LESSON 5:

I will trust
in God's timing.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days," John 11:6.

REFLECTION:

God's timing does not always match our own. When we pray for something specific, we expect to get an immediate answer. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were close friends of Jesus. When Lazarus became sick, his sisters sent for Jesus, hoping for a quick miracle of healing. Jesus got word, but he chose to stay where he was for two days longer. Mary and Martha did not know why Jesus chose to do this, but they did see that Jesus showed patience in light of the illness of his beloved friend.

Lazarus died and his family and friends were bewildered. But Jesus knew the greater need to trust in God's timing so that his illness and death could provide the miracle of his resurrection. If Jesus had shown impatience and rushed to his side, this could not have happened.

When has God challenged you to show patience and trust in his timing?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, you are the planner of my life. Help me to trust in your timing, even when it's so hard to do. Patience can be such a difficult challenge. Please help me to wait on you and trust in you at all times. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about what Jesus does in
Cana and Jerusalem: **John 2:1-11;**
4:46-5:17

Connection Word:

effort



LESSON 6:

I will make good use of my time.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at work to this very day, and I, too, am working,'" John 5:16-17.

REFLECTION:

The Jewish leaders were more concerned with the way things should be done, than they were about doing good things.

Jesus knew the importance of making good use of his time.

It's easy to place the world's process as a priority in our lives by putting our children's school education before their faith education or allowing them to participate in sports on Sunday, rather than going to church. The way of the world causes us to make difficult choices every day. We are all called to make good use of our time by doing what's right and good.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for making me a priority of your time. Help me to do the same and set a good example to the children I lead. Please be with me in the situations of my own life so that I can always remember to make good use of my time by placing you as my first priority. In your name I pray. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about the woman at the well:
John 4:1-38

Connection Word:

living water



LESSON 7:

**I will look for times to share
God's Word with others.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?'"
John 4:28-29.

REFLECTION:

After the Samaritan woman met Jesus at the well and realized he was the Messiah, she went to tell others to come and meet him. If any of us actually physically met Jesus in our day, it would be an obvious invitation to share his Word with others. The greater challenge for Christians today is to find those not so obvious moments to share God's Word. It's easier to share the Word of God with people when we know them well or are very confident about what we know. But how do we feel with people that we don't know very well or when we're not so sure about something? How can you find those times and use them to God's glory?

PRAYER:

My Teacher, I am grateful for opportunities to share your love with others. Please help me to recognize these moments, and use me to effectively share your truths. Amen.

The Time Connection

John writes about Jesus washing the disciples' feet: **John 13:1-20**

Connection Word:

serve



LESSON 8:

**I will use my time to
serve others.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet," John 13:14.

REFLECTION:

An immediate response to this verse might be one of apprehension. "God wants me to actually wash people's feet?" Yes, physically washing others' feet can be a rewarding task, but there is also a deeper meaning. Jesus is teaching us that there is nothing that we can't do for others. At the time Jesus washed his disciples' feet, it was the lowest task imaginable. He was willing to do this for his disciples as a loving example of service. Jesus wants us all to feel compelled to serve, no matter the task. Thank you for your commitment to his children, the smallest members of God's wonderful family.

PRAYER:

Lord of lords, you have shown me by your own example that there is nothing I can't do for others. Give me the opportunity to continue to serve in your precious name. Amen.

LEADER DEVOTIONS

Connecting to **Joy** by looking at **David's** life

**UNIT
SIX:**

THE JOY CONNECTION

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."
Psalm 16:11

PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and he will come near to you."
James 4:8

LESSON FOCUS:

1. God is my source of joy.
2. I find joy in whom God created me to be.
3. I can find joy even in times of trial.
4. I find joy in being content.
5. I find joy in being thankful.
6. I find joy in being kind.
7. I find joy in walking with God.
8. I want to share my joy in the Lord with others.

The Joy Connection
David shares his joy in the Lord:
Psalms 24: 103: 104

Connection Word:

joy



LESSON 1:

God is my
source of joy.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love," Psalm 103:8.

REFLECTION:

It is so easy to get pulled down by the weight of this world. This verse from Psalms is such a joyful reminder to us of just how loving God is. There are many instances where being "slow to anger" seems impossible: when a child writes on a wall, when you are cut off in traffic, when a loved one is ill, or when wars are declared. The Lord God, Creator of the universe, is not only "slow to anger" and "abounding in love" but also "compassionate and gracious." God has set the tone for us to follow. It is our turn to take his lead and be an example to others.

PRAYER:

Loving God, you never cease to amaze me!
Give me strength to live my life in a joy-
filled and loving manner. Use me to
bring others close to you. Amen.



The Joy Connection
Samuel anoints David: **1 Samuel 16:1-13**

Connection Word:

anoint



LESSON 2:

I find joy in
whom God created me to be.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart," 1 Samuel 16:7b.

REFLECTION:

These are God's words to Samuel as Samuel is waiting for God to show him which of Jesse's sons to anoint as the next king. Samuel assumes it will be Eliab, who is tall and strong. These words from God are so important. No matter how much time we spend on our outward appearance, God cares only about our heart, our spirit, who we are. Only God knows our heart, so only he can judge us. Take this challenge for one week: spend as much time on your inner self as you do on your outer self. How do you think you may improve?

PRAYER:

Faithful God, I know that you are with me as I make an effort to spend time developing my heart and my character. Thank you, my Creator, for acknowledging through Samuel that what matters most to you is who I am, not how I look. Amen.

The Joy Connection

David fights both criticism from others and a big giant: **1 Samuel 17:1-50**

Connection Word:

trial



LESSON 3:

I can find joy even in times of trial.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'" 1 Samuel 17:45.

REFLECTION:

Before David fought Goliath, he saw Goliath as simply a defiant man. He was not afraid because he knew God was with him. What "giants" do you face in your life? God is *always* with us, protecting and guiding us. When trials come our way, God wants to help us through them. It is our responsibility to invite him into the middle of our battle and then fully rely on him to help us. When we have a relationship with God, we can overcome all obstacles.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, come into my life. Build in me a faith like David. There are times in my life when I am afraid. I ask that you stand beside me when I am fearful, and guide me in battle. Amen.

The Joy Connection

David waits to be king in God's time: **1 Samuel 24:1-22**

Connection Word:

content



LESSON 4:

I find joy in being content.

DEVOTION VERSE:

"When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today," 1 Samuel 24:19.

REFLECTION:

This passage in 1 Samuel shares the words of King Saul to David. Saul was trying to find David to kill him. David then had an opportunity to kill Saul but chose not to do so. Instead, he confronted Saul and told him he spared his life out of respect, even though Saul was David's perceived enemy. It is often easier to hold a grudge than to confront someone. The Bible teaches us, in this story, that it is very important to stand up for what you believe in and not follow the pressures of a group. If David had killed Saul, as his friends urged, he would have taken the throne in an ungodly way. David was content with God's plan and ended up being blessed by his enemy. Are there circumstances in your life where you can find joy in waiting for God's timing?

PRAYER:

Holy Father, help me to have patience and to see the joys in my life. I know that you have a plan for me, and it will unfold in your timing, not mine. Amen.

The Joy Connection
David's prayer of thanksgiving:
2 Samuel 7:18-29; Psalm 100

Connection Word:

thankfulness



LESSON 5:

**I find joy in
being thankful.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name,"
Psalm 100:4.

REFLECTION:

This verse is telling us to worship God with thanksgiving and praise. How do you feel about worship? Is worship something you feel obligated to do? When we have a thankful heart for God and his goodness, worship is a natural extension of our feelings. There may be instances when we feel "dragged" to church by a spouse, friend, or child. Try to redirect your thoughts at this time and be thankful for a God who loves you.

PRAYER:

Sovereign God, thank you for investing your love in me. I am continually learning more and more about who you are and what you have done for me. How easy it is to be thankful and praise you. You are almighty! Amen.

The Joy Connection
David shows kindness to Mephibosheth:
2 Samuel 9:1-13

Connection Word:

compassion



LESSON 6:

**I find joy in
being kind.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"'Don't be afraid,' David said to him, 'for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table,'"
2 Samuel 9:7.

REFLECTION:

At a time when kings commonly killed their opponents' entire families, David honored Saul's family with kindness. He gave Saul's grandson back everything that had once been Saul's. David did this to fulfill a promise to Jonathan. David went against the norm and chose the unexpected, perhaps harder path—the path of kindness. Are there times when it's easier to take the popular path, even though you know it's not the correct path?

PRAYER:

Compassionate Father, strengthen my character. Please help me to choose kindness toward others throughout my day, especially when other choices appear to be more simple. Amen.

The Joy Connection
David's song of praise: **2 Samuel 22**

Connection Word:

praise



LESSON 7:

**I find joy in
walking with God.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light," 2 Samuel 22:29.

REFLECTION:

There is much joy to be found in walking with God and in developing a relationship with him. God has invited us to that friendship; the offer is there. He waits lovingly for us to accept it and rejoices when we do. The Lord God is the light in our world. When we plug in to his power source, our days are illuminated with his love and mercy. Joy will flow out of us, spilling into the lives of those around us. Be encouraged to plug in to the light of God. He wants to connect with you.

PRAYER:

Light of my world, you bring me so much joy. Please bring me discipline to nurture our relationship and walk with you every day. Amen.



The Joy Connection
David's psalm of praise: **Psalms 145**

Connection Word:

psalm



LESSON 8:

**I want to share my joy
in the Lord with others.**

DEVOTION VERSE:

"The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made," Psalm 145:13b.

REFLECTION:

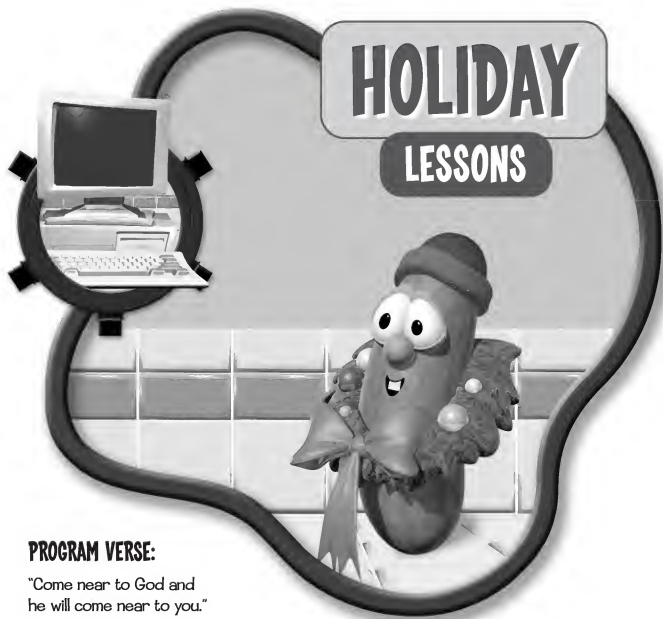
How many promises have you made and actually kept? Do you remember promises made to you and then broken? Who can you count on to always keep promises made? You can confidently trust in God! God does not make a promise to his children that he does not intend to keep. He keeps his promises to us because he loves us. God sent a rainbow to Noah as a sign of his promise that he will not flood the world again. He promises us eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As you share your joy in knowing God with others, remind them of God's promises and his love for all that he has made.

PRAYER:

Holy God, you are an excellent promise keeper! I am so glad that I can fully trust in your promises to me. Thank you for your love. Amen.

LEADER DEVOTIONS

New Year's, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas



PROGRAM VERSE:

"Come near to God and
he will come near to you."
James 4:8

HOLIDAY LESSON FOCUS:

- New Year's—
Genesis 1:1-31
- Easter—
Luke 23-24:12
- Thanksgiving—
Mark 12:41-44
- Christmas—
Luke 2:1-20

Holiday Lesson
A new creation:
Genesis 1:1-31



NEW YEAR'S

DEVOTION VERSE:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them,"
Genesis 1:27.

REFLECTION:

The New Year is often a good time to make decisions about how we can change by creating new habits and making new choices for the days ahead. In Genesis 1:1-31 we are reminded that God created each one of us in *his* image. There is no better reminder of how special God thinks we are than to know we are created in the likeness of him! As the New Year begins, remember how special you are in God's eyes and how much he loves you. As you prepare for a new year, remember that you are already a new creation, because you have accepted Jesus in your heart! Let your plans and changes reflect the new creation you became when you said YES to a relationship with the Lord!

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, we thank you for creating all things new! We praise you for creating us so special and for allowing us to celebrate another year. Thank you for your love. Please watch over us in the next year and help us to make new choices that will please you. In your name we pray. Amen.

Holiday Lesson
We are forgiven:
Luke 23-24:53



EASTER

DEVOTION VERSE:

"He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,'" Luke 24: 46-47.

REFLECTION:

Jesus explained that he had suffered and risen from the dead. He told his disciples that he was alive and could offer forgiveness of sins to all; and he called upon his disciples to preach this in his name to everyone. When you think about your relationship with Jesus, do you relate to him as though he is alive? Do you remember that he has forgiven *your* sins and he calls *you* to preach this in his name to everyone? The Spirit fills us with the love of God so that we can share his love with others, every day. May this Easter bring you much joy in the knowledge that Jesus Christ is indeed alive, and he is waiting to work with you to spread this news to others!

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, loving Lord, we praise your name for the joy you bring us in the gift of life through your Son, Jesus. May you shine your love through me today and every day, that I may be a living example of Jesus in our world to everyone I meet. Amen.

Holiday Lesson
All that I have: **Mark 12:41-44**



THANKSGIVING

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on,'" Mark 12: 43-44.

REFLECTION:

Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity to consider all the things that God has done for us. It's easy to thank God when things are going well and we have plenty of money. The greater challenge is to be thankful during times of challenge, adversity, and poverty. The story from Mark 12:41-44 is a beautiful illustration of a woman who is willing to give all she has to the Lord. Would you be willing to give your last coins in thankfulness to serve God? How does your financial commitment compare to that of the widow's offering? Search deep in your heart for ways to show your true thankfulness for all God has given you. Go to him in prayer and share your struggles. Trust in his care. Then find ways to receive his love and return that love in thankfulness.

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I acknowledge that you are the creator and all that I have is yours. I know that life gets hectic and I get wrapped up in my own sorrows and disappointments. It's easy for me to forget all that you are and all that you have offered me. Forgive my self-centered attitude and help me to keep my eyes on you. Amen.

Holiday Lesson
Jesus is born in Bethlehem:
Luke 2:1-20



CHRISTMAS

DEVOTION VERSE:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord," Luke 2:11.

REFLECTION:

Angels came to shepherds, busy watching over their sheep, and told them of the birth of Jesus. The angel told the shepherds that a Savior had been born to *them*. Jesus was born to all people from all walks of life. Jesus was born for all of us, to save us from sin. God gave us an incredible gift on that first Christmas. Cherish that gift and then re-gift it to someone you care about. Share God's gift of Jesus with the people around you. Merry Christmas to you, and many blessings as the love of God fills your heart today.

PRAYER:

Dear God, you are generous! Thank you for the eternal gift of your Son, Jesus. Amen.